**Orangutans may act as human beings**

*“The murders of the Rue Morgue”* (Poe, 1841) is a story about a man looking for an answer. This man, C. August Dupin, together with his unnamed partner, travels for different theories in order to solve the murder of two women in a closed room. It comes to be that the crimes were committed by an animal, an ourang-outang. And it is at this point that the narration takes a different path. It is no longer important who the murderer is, but at which point an animal can behave or perhaps, thinks as a human being. It is possible for an animal, especially those related to human being in term of evolution, to do what the orangutan did in the story

There are many ways of describing intelligence, especially if this characteristic is associated with the more important features of a person. But, what happened if this term is used to refer to an animal? Intelligence may appear to be just a part of human nature. Nevertheless some animals, mainly those closer to human beings in terms of evolution, show characteristics that could be related to a degree of intelligence. In the story, the orangutan is presented as quite intelligent animal, capable of performing some actions. These actions are just an imitation of its master’s behavior, however the animal’s intelligence is perceived. “Razor in hand, and fully lathered, it was sitting before a looking-glass, attempting the operation of shaving, in which it had no doubt previously watched its master through the key-hole of the closet” (Poe, 1994 p. 150)

An orangutan is an animal close related with human beings. “Orangutan and humans are cousins; they belong to the same branch and family” (Groves, 2001 p. 68). In fact, they may behave and act as human, performing and doing some things that may be assumed as just for humans. Orangutans are one of the most intelligent creatures on this earth. A 2008 research done in two of these hominids at the Leipzig Zoo in Germany showed that they can use calculated reciprocity, which involves weighing the costs and benefits of gift exchanges and keeping track of these over time (Dufour, Pelé, Neumann, Thierry & Call, 2008 p. 172 -175) In the story, the animal attempts to have a shave, because of what he witnesses every day. Also, it may be inferred that the orangutan of the story understands what is going on, and is afraid of being punish for its master with a whip “ He had been accustomed, however, to quiet the creature, even in its fiercest moods, by the use of a whip, and to this he now resorted. Upon sight of it, the Ourang-Outang sprang at once through the door of the chamber” (Poe, 1994 p. 151) Through this, it may be inferred that orangutans may perform some actions that can be considered as proper of the human kind.

Taking into account some details of the story, such as the condition of cruelty to which the animal is exposed by its master; in addition to the unknown environment where the actions take place, it could be assumed that an orangutan may behave as a person, and may act in the same way, performing all the things described in the short story.

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References

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